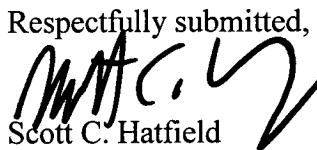


REMARKS

The Applicants sincerely appreciate that thorough examination of the present application as evidenced by the Office Actions of December 22, 2004, March 9, 2005, and November 16, 2005. In particular, the Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that Claim 5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In response, the Applicants have: amended Claim 1 to include all recitations of Claim 5 (indicated allowable); canceled Claims 5, 11-15, 19-20, 40-49, and 68-79; and amended Claim 80 to correct a minor informality noted therein. Accordingly, Claim 1 has been placed in a condition indicated allowable, and the remaining dependent Claims 2-4 and 80 all depend from Claim 1 so that no new issues have been raised. Accordingly, a Notice Allowance is respectfully requested in due course.

The Applicants submitted an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) on November 4, 2005, together with a Form PTO-1449 and copies of the non-U.S. patent references. This IDS was submitted in compliance with 37 C.F.R. Sec. 1.97 before mailing of the Final Office Action. Copies of the IDS and the Form PTO-1449 are attached hereto showing receipt at the U.S. Patent Office on November 7, 2005. These copies of the IDS and the Form PTO-1449 were obtained using the U.S. Patent Office Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Consideration of all references cited in the Form PTO-1449 is thus respectfully requested.

Accordingly, the Applicants submit that all pending claims in the present application are in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested in due course. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney by telephone should any additional issues need to be addressed.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.8

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: MAIL STOP AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA, 22313-1450, on January 4, 2006.

Joyce Paoli

Joyce Paoli